

To all public committee members,

I vehemently oppose legalizing physician-assisted suicide. Doctors who presumably entered the medical field to heal and "do no harm" should not be placed in a position of offering lethal drugs to their patients who are diagnosed with a terminal condition. The New England Journal of Medicine's (NEJM, 9/13/13) survey of mostly doctors indicates that 65% of readers compared to 67 % among US voters were against physician-assisted suicide. The experience of one Oregon doctor clearly illustrates the inherent danger of such a law. Fourteen years ago one of his patients was adamant that she use Oregon law to end her life. He was successful in stalling such action and states that now 14 years later she is happy to be alive.

Dr. Stevens states that assisted-suicide legalization and prioritized medical care based on prognosis has created a danger for his patients on Medicaid which will cover the patients suicide but not helpful treatments.

I am concerned that this law would be abused in respect to the handicapped, the frail and aged. Dr. William Toffler, the National Director of Physicians for Compassionate Care Education Foundation of Oregon reports that the diagnosis of "terminal" has been stretched to include chronic conditions such as lower respiratory disease and diabetes for individuals dependent on medications such as insulin to live. If treated these individuals are likely to have years to live, not just six months.

An assisted-suicide bill will put pressure on the frail, elderly, and handicapped to prematurely end their lives so as not to be a burden. Will greedy relatives with an eye on an inheritance encourage such action? Where will this lead? In a few years will we considering a bill to euthanize ill children like Belgium? Please vote no on this legislation. Everyone deserves appropriate treatment or palliative care, not a death.

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